1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Once the full ceremony has been performed the two *ingʒong* are regarded as being in truth [illegible] of one father, and intermarriage between their descendants is [illegible]dden as incestuous for nine generations. The relationship between one *ingʒong* and his *ingʒong*'s wife is a respectful one, and to mark his respect he will usually address her as 'mother'. It would be almost incestuous to sleep with your *ingʒong*'s wife, but a woman does not have to hide from her husband's *ingʒong* as is the case with the *mit* of Nepal.[2] As a general rule the *ingʒong* relationship is hereditary, the sons of *ingʒong* being themselves *ingʒong*; but there is no compulsion about this and if a son does not get on with his father's *ingʒong* and his sons he can set up new relationships. Even with hereditary *ingʒong* the full ceremonial must be performed in each generation.

Nowadays the Lepchas only set up the relationship with Sikkimese and Tibetans, for the exchange of crops and dye-wood for salt, carpets and metal vessels; they are, they say, no longer friendly with the Nepali and will have no relationships with them. *Ingʒong* is not an exclusive relationship. At the end of March a Sikkimese-Tibetan husband and wife from Lachen arrived in Lingthem with rugs which they wished to exchange for crops, dye-wood and cash. In the whole Talung valley they had eleven *ingʒong*, three of whom were in Lingthem; they spent one night in the house of each. When an *ingʒong* arrives on a visit efforts are made to feast him as well as possible; and when Lepchas go to visit their *ingʒong* they take with them presents of grain, and, if possible, meat. Most of the men of Lingthem have at least three Sikkimese or Tibetan *ingʒong*.

Properly speaking the term *ingʒong* is only applicable to the ceremonial trading-relationship set up between Lepchas and foreigners; but the word is very frequently used between Lepchas with the meaning 'my special friend.' It sometimes happens that two men will drink *chi* together ceremoniously to give some formality to their relationship; but they do not perform the full ceremony for that would entail the nine-generation marriage ban, and in the small community of Zongu, where the choice of wives is already limited, this would speedily produce an impossible state of affairs. It took me a considerable time to straighten out the different implications of the term *ingʒong*, for the word is in constant use,

[2] For this fact and for other details in this book concerning the Nepali I am indebted to information derived from Mr. C. J. Morris, either in conversation or from his book '*Gurkhas*' *Handbooks for the Indian Army* (Delhi 1936).

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572 chiefly with its derivative meaning; nowadays the necessity of trading is so slight and the country relatively so peaceful that the earlier implications are being forgotten by most of the Lepchas.

In Lingthem and the neighbouring villages there are eight pairs of men who call themselves *ingʒong*; they give one another an elaborate feast every year, and always make rather special efforts to entertain their friends when they visit. Two reasons are advanced for setting up this inter- and intra-village relationship: either because the two men love one another, or because one or both lack anybody they can call 'brother' and wish for somebody they can look to for help in emergencies and who will care for their dependants in the event of untimely death. There is no ban on the children of such '*ingʒong*' marrying; the children call one another *ingʒong-bo* which is an abbreviation for 'child of father's *ingʒong*'. A wife and her husband's *ingʒong* will usually call one another mutually *ingʒong* if they are not otherwise related; if the husband's friend is markedly older than the woman she will call him 'father'. These Lepcha relationships are not very stable and are often allowed to lapse; this is of no importance as the relationship has no religious sanctions. I was told that two women could set up such a relationship but I neither found nor heard of any instances of this.

Sometimes the term is used even more loosely, without any sort of ceremony having taken place; two boys or young men, not nearly related, who spend much time together working or hunting, or even who are close neighbours, will call and speak of one another as *ingʒong*. Used this way the term is almost meaningless, though it has a trifle more warmth than *tyol*, the ordinary word for friend. There is no sort of overt homosexuality or even physical intimacy in the relationship. The Lepchas have almost completely separated the notions of love and sex; they use the same word to say they 'love' their friends, their parents and their wives; sexual activity is always referred to in direct and unambiguous terms. [838] Homosexuality is a meaningless concept for them.

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648 There is an obligation on the part of the Lepchas of Zongu to supply boys to act as servants for the Maharajah in his palace at Gangtok, and young men to be trained as State carpenters. When people are wanted to fill either of these posts an order is